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# THE

# PLOTTER

******************************************

## MEETING

The MARCH  meeting will be

on: FRI., MARCH 6, 1987

at: 7:30 P.M.
in: COMMUNITY ROOM
    FAR WEST FEDERAL S & L
    OREGON CITY SHOPPING CENTER

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WHAT YOU WILL
 FIND IN THIS
   ISSUE-

COMPUTING THE FUTURE--
IN CLACKAMAS COUNTY
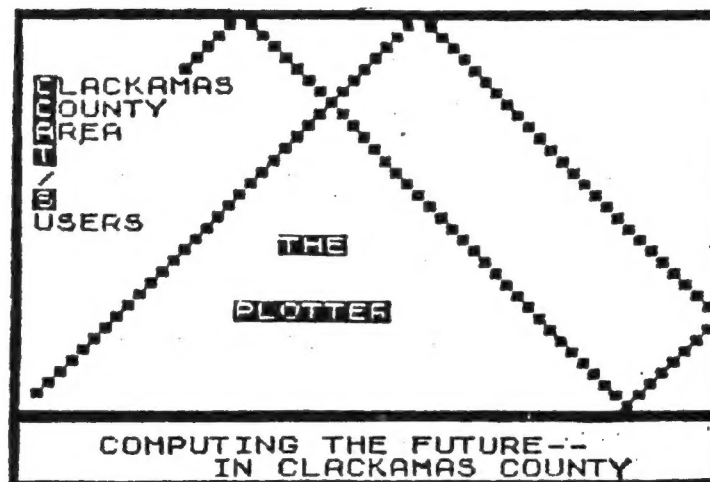
## Chairman's Corner

We had a good, lively discussion last meeting. If you are not attending, you are really missing out. I'd also enjoy hearing why you don't attend

Dick has been putting out a fine newsletter every month, but he needs your help. Dick is the Editor, not the writer of our newsletter. Send him something every month and we will continue to have a quality newsletter.

The Timex Computerfest is coming soon and is promising to do even better than last years'. You should consider attending, if possible.

Our MC-SIG had a good session. Its not too late to get in on the fun!

We need more members and more involved members. Bring a friend and we will see you at the meeting.

Syd
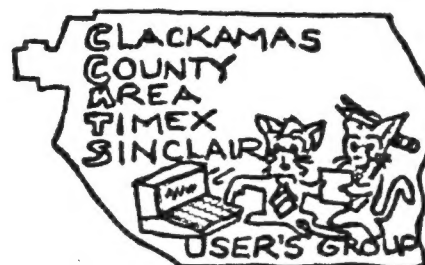
# SECRETARY'S SECRETS

## by Jack Armstrong

Syd Wyncoop called the February meet to order at 7:45 and called on Rod to give the treasury report. The club is in better financial condition now with dues coming in since the start of the year. Old Business was called for and Merlin Raymond reported the membership committee had sent out letters to all old members inviting them to attend. He reported some positive response. He also has written and printed a flyer that can be placed on bulletin board display. Anyone who wants to obtain a copy can get in touch with him. He believes it may bring some computers out of the closet. He also absorbed the cost of mailing the letters, so we owe him our thanks. Syd reported on the Special Interest Group that met at PCC. The group was small, but will try again on Saturday. There was further discussion about this and other subjects that may become SIG's. Comments came from Mike Carver, Dennis Jurries, Syd and D. Lewis. Rod reported that Syd had compiled reduced versions of articles from Computer Shopper for our Library. He also has put his Time Designs series into the Library through Chap. 6. Galen asked if it would be possible to use the series as a self-study project. Further discussion brought comments that it would be better to join the SIG and it would be more productive. Syd reported that Lynn Stransky has alloted space on the BECCA BBS for our use--3 megabytes for uploading files. Call 760-6411 to log in free. Rod said his BBS is up and running from 10 pm to 10 am and has 7 message bases including one for the 1000, the 2068 and the QL. There is also one for General use, one for C/CATS and one for his weekly specials. It is on an AERCO system with a 2068 on line. Call it on 656-8072. Syd brought a Show & Tell -- a modem board he has converted into a serial board. Dick reported that due to some confusion, our March meeting will be on the 6th (1st Friday). He also asked members to send in articles/programs for all of the 3 computers. The meeting ended at 9:00.

# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Thanks to SMUG Bytes newsletter (Jan. 1987) this issue carries a strong message and thoughts about the future of our computers in the business stream. There is no doubt that there has been a substantial drop-off of interest on the part of many "beginners", much as takes place with many new activities (jogging, running, camping, Cook-Pot cookery, etc.). We try something new and find it interesting for awile.

Some of us have found our computets so challenging that there isn't enough spare time available to work with this equipment, to learn and become more masterful users.

Hopefully there will continue to be a nucleous of CCAT/S members who will take pleasure in this hobby and continue to be available to guide and assist others.

It is very apparent that very few people can go it alone in learning and using any computer. Books, stored programs and utilities, magazines, helpful neighbors, and knowledgeable products producers and distributors, are crutches we all use and are thankful for. A bare computer has little value by itself (the electronics/hardware). It is a fact of life that we must equip it with peripherals (monitors, in/out devices, printers, electric power, sound, etc.). Thus, we are mistakes if we may think that the cost of a computer is the only investment required to go into this hobby. We have been and are fortunate that one of our staunch members is a distributor who continually tries to find the best products at the best prices. This has been an important element in keeping our organization together and I for one wish to thank Rod Gowen and family for their time and efforts in our behalf.

I would like to see the predictions in SMUG Bytes be proven false, and it is active groups like CCAT/S who can make this possible.

## --NOTICE--

Please note that the MARCH meeting is on the first Friday, the 6th. Sorry about that!

# NEW BBS IN TOWN

by: ROD GOWEN

RMG ENTERPRISES, 1419 1/2 7TH STREET OREGON CITY, OR 97045, has set up a new BBS using CASBOARD from Kurt Casby, the author of LOADER IV & V. The new BBS is running on an un-expanded TS2068 with an AERCO FD 68 disk I/F and a DSDD drive. It will be online for 12 hours per day, everyday, starting February 1, 1987. It has been up and running without any problems for almost 3 weeks at this time. The hours are from 10 PM until 10 AM each day, Pacific time. Do not phone at any other time (that is, between 10 AM and 10 PM) as this is a private phone line and the BBS will not be on line during those hours. You will just be wasting a long-distance call if you are calling from outside Portland.

A little information to help any of you who may wish to take advantage of the BBS. The system is set up to make use of XMODEM PROTOCOL so it is set up with the following parameters:

        8 BIT WORD
        1 STOP BIT
        PARITY: NONE
        PASSWORD: RMG
        PHONE: 503/656-8072

If you fail to have your terminal software set up with these settings, you will not be able to log on to the system.

Once you have logged on, you will find that there are now 7 different message bases on the BBS. These include:

    A> TS GENERAL INTEREST
    B> WEEKLY SPECIALS
    C> PLACE A C.O.D. ORDER
    D> 1000/1500 ONLY
    E> QL USERS ONLY
    F> 2068 USERS ONLY
    G> CCAT/S NOTEBOOK

There is room for 2-3 more bases and/or upload/download areas. There may soon be an FD-68 users base if the interest is sufficient. RMG will also set up a download base for our user group if you are interested. Call up and voice your opinions.

# BITS & BYTES

by: ROD GOWEN

Heard any TS related news lately? Did you get any information in the mail from other users, user groups, or vendors that may be of interest to our readers? If so, why not share it with us? We need all of the help that we can get. Please send any info that you might have to: Rod Gowen, C/O CCAT/S, 1419 1/2 7th Street, Oregon City, OR 97045, or, phone in at: 503/655-7484, 10 AM- 10 PM weekdays. I know that the entire user group will appreciate it!

FLASH!!-As I sat down to put this column together this time, Feb. 18, 1987, to be exact, I received the news that Sir Clive has just unveiled his latest creation: An IBM compatible lap-top computer that weighs about 2 pounds and is reported to have, when produced, a retail price in the neighborhood of $350! I do not know any other information at this time as to who, if anyone, will be producing and marketing this newest product. We will try to keep you posted as we get more on it.

RMG ENTERPRISES-wishes you to know that they have a new BBS on line daily from 10 PM to 10 AM Pacific time. It has 7 (at present) message bases with room for 2-3 more. (See article elsewhere in this newsletter). They have dedicated the BBS to TS users everywhere. There is a CCAT/S message base for your use. It may also have a download area at a later date. We hope that you will make use of it. The phone # and set-up are as follows: 503/656-8072, 8 BIT WORD, 1 STOP BIT, PARITY: NONE There are even Special prices on some RMG products!

As you can see by the size of this months' column, I have not received a lot of information which I can pass on to the loyal readers of THE PLOTTER. I hope that there will be more to report on next time. If you know of ANY TS related news that may be of some interest to our readers, PLEASE call or send it in! You can even use the RMG BBS to leave news!

## USE YOUR 80 COLUMN PRINTER FROM BASIC

We had quite a few enquiries at the last meeting on using a large printer from Basic. I have given a solution, verbally, before but it seems there is still a great of confusion. Here is an example program and description to help pave your path to gaining the use you desire from your printer.

First, a word of caution. The example program assumes that you have an Epson or compatible printer. Each printer has its own set of codes to place it into certain modes of operation. You may have to search your printer manual for the correct codes but the principle will be the same as described here.

You can send two kinds of information to your printer, text or control codes. Most dot-matrix printers also have a bit-image graphics mode but we will not discuss that today.

Text is sent as ASCII character codes. You can find a table of these codes in many books. Only printable characters (letters & puntuation) can be sent in this manner. The used is:

Lprint "Hello there!"

Often, you will want to format the text in some special mode, such as expanded characters or italics. This is where we need the control codes.

Control codes are simply codes that tell the printer to shift gears. Most are sent after a special control code, called Escape. This is so the printer knows that you are sending it a control codes, instead of text. It is these codes that must be supplied by the manufacturer of the printer, as they have not been completely standardized.

The typical method of sending the control codes is by pressing the Escape key and another key at the same time. Unfortunately, the Timex does not have an Escape key.

The other method of sending these control codes must used. It is:

Lprint Chr$ 27; Chr$ 52

You lprint the character code for Escape, which is 27, then whatever character codes are needed follow it. The above example will turn on the italics mode for Epson printers.

You must refer to your printer manual for the neccessary control codes for your printer.

There are some 'standard' control codes. They will appear on the ASCII chart as the unprintable character codes, 0-31. These are sent without the Escape code.

You must also be careful how you terminate your control code line. Just as in Basic, anything other than a semi-colon will cause the printing to begin on the next line.

Experiment some. If you are still having difficulty, bring your printer manual to the next meeting. We will discuss the problem, then.

Syd

```
    0>REM
          Cr w/LF.......Poke 64460
,10       Cr w/o LF.....Poke 6446
0,0       Width.........Poke 644
59,Width-1Print Mode....Poke 64
456,1     Control Mode..Poke 6
4456,0    Turn On.......Poke
26703,205               & Poke
 26704,251   Turn Off......Pok
e 26703,0               & Po
ke 26704,5
    1 CLEAR 64455: LOAD ""CODE :
REM This line loads the printer
     driver code. You must have
         already saved a customize
d         version, as directed by
the        Aerco software that cam
e          with your interface.
    2 BORDER 0: PAPER 0: INK 9: C
LS :                        RE
M Set screen attributes
   10 INPUT AT 0,0;"Please select
:"'"<P>rinter or <T>S 2040:"; L
INE a$:                     R
EM Select a printer
   20 IF a$="T" OR a$="t" THEN  P
OKE 26703,0: POKE 26704,5: GO T
O 110:
REM Correct channel info to use
  the TS2040 printer
   30 IF a$="P" OR a$="p" THEN  P
OKE 26703,205: POKE 26704,251:
GO TO 50:
REM Correct channel info to use
  the 80 column printer
   40 GO TO 10:               REM
  Trap Entry Errors
   50 INPUT AT 0,0;"Length of lin
e to be printed?"' LINE a$: REM
Get width of printer or line
```

4

```
   60 IF VAL a$<1 OR VAL a$>150 T
HEN   GO TO 50:                R
EM Trap entry errors
   70 POKE 64459,VAL a$-1:     REM
 Set line length to print
   80 INPUT "Do you need a line f
ed after   the carriage return
s? (Y/N)"; LINE a$:            R
EM This depends on how your pri
ntermicro-switches are set. Ans
wer Yif not sure.
   90 IF a$="N" OR a$="n" THEN  P
OKE 64460,0: GO TO 300:        R
EM This sets up for no LF after
 CR
  100 POKE 64460,10:           REM
 This sets up for a LF after CR

  110 PRINT "Ok, we should be set
-up correct for the printer we
selected."'''"You may re-select
 printer optionby re-running the
 program."'''"You should now stu
dy the programlisting from line
 300 on to"'"determine how to u
se the printerdriver to print a
ny text from"'"Basic.": LIST 30
0
  300 REM The following program
lines demonstrate the method yo
uneed to use to print to a larg
printer, from Basic, with the
 Aerco printer driver, which
is  supplied with their interfa
ce.
  310 LET Mode=64456:
       LET Print=1:
         LET Cntrl=0:
 REM We will use these variable
 namesto make the listing clear
er
  320 LPRINT "This is a test line
. It is printed exactly as type
d."
  330 POKE mode,cntrl:
       LPRINT CHR$ 14;:         R
EM This will send the control c
ode for large letters to the pr
inter
  340 POKE mode,print:
       LPRINT "We are printing L
ARGE letters.":
REM We are back in text mode, b
ut weare printing large letters

  350 POKE mode,cntrl:
       LPRINT CHR$ 15;:         R
 This will send the control c
ode for small letters to the pr
inter
```

```
  360 POKE mode,print:
       LPRINT "We should now be
printing in condensed mode.":
REM We are back in text mode, b
ut weare printing small letters

  370  POKE mode,cntrl:
       LPRINT CHR$ 18;:
REM We have to turn off the shi
ft-inmode. This was not needed
for   shift-out as shift-out is
 only  active for one line of t
ext.
  380 POKE mode,print:
       LPRINT "This is a test li
ne. It is printed exactly as ty
ped.":
 REM We are back in normal mode
.
  390 POKE mode,cntrl:
       LPRINT CHR$ 27;CHR$ 52: R
EM This will turn on Italic mod
e
  400 POKE mode,print:
       LPRINT "This is Italic mo
de, your printer can do it":
REM Print in Italics mode
  410  POKE mode,cntrl:
       LPRINT CHR$ 27;CHR$ 53:
REM This will turn off italic m
ode
  420 LPRINT "and that is the end
of our examples."
```

```
This is a test line. It is printed exactly
We are printing LARGE
We should now be printing in condensed mode.
This is a test line. It is printed exactly
This is a test line. It is printed exactly
We are printing LARGE
We should now be printing in condensed mode.
This is a test line. It is printed exactly
This is Italic mode, your printer can do it
and that is the end of our examples.
```

# GUEST EDITORIAL

Dave Franson, **SMUG** Bytes

## SO LONG...

One of the great things about putting this newsletter together is the fact that I can indulge myself and write whatever I wish. This article is what amounts to my "farewell speech," as I leave the posts of SMUG Secretary and newsletter editor.

I very much enjoyed the opportunity to edit the newsletter during the past year. I think we published some excellent articles, and our newsletter stands out among the others for its wealth of usable material and its professional look. As much as possible, I tried to produce the newsletter solely with my TS2068, MSCRIPT, and Star SG-10 printer. I think this combination, along with a little imagination, has served to showcase the capabilities of low-cost computing. Alas, the task of assembling the newsletter also involved a lot of time, and my current lack of time is the reason I'm giving it up. I still intend to contribute at least one article a month, however, so you're by no means rid of me yet!

As Secretary of SMUG, I think I accomplished some pretty neat things. Numero Uno was simply keeping up with the requests for information. I also did a mass mailing and several smaller mailings to other Sinclair user groups that are still active in the U.S. and Canada. I hope that our ties with other groups can continue to grow. In addition, I strived to take accurate minutes of our monthly meetings and included them in the newsletter. This will serve to provide an informal history of SMUG in the years hence.

But the real reason I'm getting up on this soapbox is to again tell you to PARTICIPATE!! The future of this club (and implicitly the future of the support you'll enjoy for your Timex/Sinclair computers) depends on your participation. We've been lucky so far that a few dedicated individuals (they know and you know who they are) have been excited and motivated enough to give of their time and expertise to keep this club moving. The same is true of Timex/Sinclair support on the national level.

### Some Sobering Facts

Now let's talk some sobering facts. It's been nearly three years since Timex bailed out of the American market. The TS1000 and ZX81 are virtually dead from a software support point of view, even in England. The QL also has two feet firmly planted in the grave. The 2068 continues to enjoy the support of several small software and hardware vendors in this country, as well as a regularly published small magazine (Time Designs). In England, the Spectrum was until earlier this year a major contender. Its chief attraction for continued marketing efforts is its huge installed user base. Those of us lucky enough to be running some kind of Spectrum emulation on our 2068s have been reaping the benefits of the strong software support for the Spectrum. But with the Amstrad buyout of Sinclair earlier this year, the future of even the Spectrum starts to get a little cloudy. Amstrad sees the machine as primarily a games machine, and didn't bother to put the necessary disk interface, standard printer port, etc. required for a machine to be taken seriously in today's marketplace. The built-in tape recorder mandates the fashion in which the machine will be perceived-- as a computing "toy," good for games and nothing else. Of course we know better, but that's how the computer buying public is going to view the machine. And this is even true if, wonder of wonders, Amstrad decided to market the machine in the U.S.

## A Changed Marketplace

The largest significant factor behind all this gloom and doom is that the computer market has changed dramatically in the past three years. These are the days of the $500.00 IBM PC clone and the $600.00 512K 32-bit Atari ST. Back in the heydey of Timex computers, low cost was one of the chief determinants behind which home computer you purchased. With a proliferation of computers far more powerful than the Timex computers, sold for extremely low prices, people will no longer stand for the idiosyncracies that we find so charming and that give our machines a real personality. People are no longer interested in cassette tapes as a storage medium, thermal printers, crummy keyboards, and 300 baud dedicated modems. I give the new Spectrum another two years of life at most.

## The Future

So now I've painted a pretty bleak picture. I think my predictions are accurate, but they're certainly not written in stone. I believe that Timex/Sinclair computers have about two years of support left in the U.S.
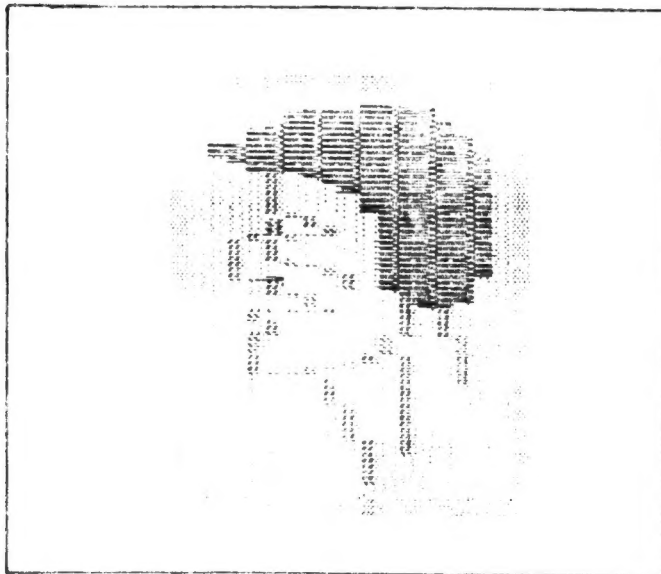
That's an optimistic figure. The only factor that will stretch it out to two years is the PARTICIPATION of the user community. This means participation in users groups, participation on Compuserve, subscribing to TS-specific magazines, and attending any conventions. This also means that SOFTWARE PIRACY MUST STOP!! If you continue to pirate newly-developed software, you're simply digging your own grave. The incentive to develop new software for the Timex computers in the U.S. is so small already, and the knowledge that you won't be properly compensated for your development efforts removes any incentives altogether. If an end to software piracy and lack of participation doesn't come, I'll give the U.S. Timex/Sinclair community another year of survival at best.

## The End

So now let me clamber back off my soapbox and sit down. I've said my piece, and it's time for a new editor to assume the helm. Once again, thanks for the opportunity to edit the newsletter and serve as Secretary. And don't forget-- the future support you'll receive for your Timex/Sinclair computers rests in your own hands!!!

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## TRANSPARENT INK!

### Dick Wagner

Please refer to Syd Wyncoop's article on Color Codes in the January issue and my article in the December issue (More On Attributes).

I recently read more on this subject that sheds additional light on the use of color attributes. This was found in "The Art Of Programming The ZX Spectrum" by M James, an English publication. There will be a review on this small book later.

It is possible to assign an attribute to a specific location on the screen and call it up at will. It can be a color as PAPER or INK, and it can be BRIGHT and or FLASH. Try these two lines:

```
10 PRINT AT 10,10; FLASH 1; "*"
```
RUN and there is a flashing "*". Now add this line and RUN:
```
20 PRINT AT 10,10; FLASH 8; "BANG"
```
The "B" is the only character flashing because it is taking the action given to this location when FLASH 8 is used.

In a program structure it might be used like this:

```
10 PRINT AT 10,16; FLASH 1 ;"******
**"
80 PRINT AT 10,0; FLASH 8;"This line
has a flashing word!"
```

The word "flashing" replaces the 8 "*" by the use of FLASH 8. The same principal applies to to BRIGHT, INK, and PAPER and in combination.

For PAPER 8 any new character at the designated location will assume the color of the paper background assigned by PAPER. Such characteristics can be called "transparent" in the sense that it lets the original attribute show thru.

This ability to assign a feature to a specific location would seem to have value in games in conjunction with a color monitor, as well with a B & W monitor.

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